

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

MBFR-04 SAJ-01 DODE-00 H-03 NSC-10 SS-15 ACDA-19

IO-13 OMB-01 CU-04 EB-11 SCI-06 FCC-03 OTPE-00 COME-00

DRC-01 /170 W

----- 086922

R 131710Z SEP 73

FM USMISSION NATO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1565

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 4306

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: CSCE - NEW SOVIET TACK ON FREER EXCHANGE OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS

REF: A) STATE 170972; B) MOSCOW 10040; C) MOSCOW 9890

SUMMARY: INITIAL POLADS DISCUSSION SEPTEMBER 11 OF POSSIBLE NEW SOVIET

LINE ON FREER MOVEMENT REVEALED GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH DEPARTMENT'S AND EMBASSY MOSCOW'S ASSESSMENTS REFTELS. HOWEVER, STATEMENTS BY OTHER DELS INDICATED THAT NATIONAL AUTHORITIES WERE CLOSELY FOLLOWING CAMPAIGN AGAINST SAKHAROV AND SOLZHENITSYN FOR SIGNS OF LIKELY SOVIET APPROACH TO DISCUSSION OF BASKET THREE ISSUES IN GENEVA.

REPORTED SOVIET ACTION IN CEASING JAMMING OF THREE WESTERN RADIO STATIONS WILL PROBABLY BE RAISED WHEN COMMITTEE RETURNS TO SUBJECT SEPTEMBER 18 MEETING. WE WILL BE GUIDED BY STATE 181131 ON RADIO JAMMING ISSUE BUT WOULD WELCOME ANY ANALYSIS DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY MOSCOW CAN PROVIDE OF SIGNIFICANCE OF REPORTBED SOVIET MOVE, WHICH WILL CLEARLY HAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR BASKET THREE DISCUSSION IN GENEVA. END SUMMARY

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1. IN COMMENTING ON POSSIBLE NEW TACK IN SOVIET POLICY REGARDING FREER EXCHANGES MOST DELEGATIONS STRESSED HIGHLY CONTRADICTIONARY ELEMENTS IN CURRENT SOVIET ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS. THEY AGREED WITH U.S. VIEW THAT BREZHNEV'S AUGUST 15 ALMA-ATA SPEECH DID CON-

TAIN INTERESTING HINTS OF MORE FLEXIBLE POSITION, BUT THEY POINTED OUT THAT SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OF SUBJECT SINCE AUGUST 15 HAD BEEN CONTRADICTORY, AT BEST. SUBSEQUENT YAKIR-KRASSIN TRAIL AND CAMPAIGN AGAINST SAKHAROV/SOLZHENITSYN WERE SEEN BY MOST DELS AS EFFORTS BY REGIME TO ESTABLISH CLEARLY, FOR BENEFIT OF BOTH SOVIET POPULATION AND WESTERN COUNTRIES, LIMITS OF SOVIET FLEXIBILITY ON THESE ISSUES. UK AND CANADIAN REP SUGGESTED THAT APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS IN SOVIET POLICY COULD REFLECT DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN CPSU LEADERSHIP. FRG REP REPORTED ANALYSIS BEING PUSHED BY PRC EMBASSY IN MOSCOW ACCORDING TO WHICH CAMPAIGN AGAINST DISSIDENTS REFLECTED WEAKENING OF BREZHNEV'S POSITION. HOWEVER, FRG REP ADVISED THAT BONN WAS INCLINED DOUBT THAT CAMPAIGN REFLECTED LEADERSHIP DIFFERENCES.

2. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION AS TO IMPACT OF POSSIBLE SOVIET POLICY SHIFTS ON UPCOMING DISCUSSIONS IN GENEVA. ASIDE FROM AGREEMENT THAT SITUATION SHOULD BE WATCHED VERY CLOSELY, DELEGATIONS WERE GENERALLY UNSURE WHAT INFLUENCE, IF ANY, BREZHNEV'S AUGUST 15 SPEECH AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS WOULD HAVE. CANADIAN REP ARGUED THAT SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF GREATER CONTACTS WITH WEST, REGARDLESS OF WHAT BREZHNEV SAID IN ALMA-ATA, COULD BE OBTAINED IN GENEVA ONLY THROUGH VERY HARD BARGAINING AND THEN THROUGH CAREFUL WESTERN USE OF CONCESSIONS IN ECONOMIC/ TECHNOLOGICAL AREA. PERSISTENT SOVIET ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, IN VIEW OF CANADIAN REP, GIVE WEST CONSIDERABLE LEVERAGE OVER SOVIETS "IF WE WANT TO USE IT."

3. COMMENT: POLADS WILL RETURN TO SUBJECT SEPTEMBER 18, AT WHICH TIME REPORTED SOVIET CESSATION OF JAMMING AGAINST VOA, BBC, AND DEUTSCHE WELLE WILL DOUBTLESS BE SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 02 APR 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973NATO04306
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: NATO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730962/abqcecal.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: n/a
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) STATE 170972; B) MOSCOW 10040; C) MOSCOW 9890
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Aug-2001 by elyme>; APPROVED <24-Sep-2001 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CSCE - NEW SOVIET TACK ON FREER EXCHANGE OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO
To: STATE INFO MOSCOW
GENEVA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005